

Committee on the Budget

Jim Nussle, Chairman

United States House of Representatives

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Democrats Want to Stop Payment on Tax Surplus Refunds

"We've got to go back and look at the Bush tax cut, which I think will be seen from hindsight of history as one of the most serious mistakes the federal government" has ever made.

"It's fiscally irresponsible. It threatens our prosperity."

"The Bush fiscal program is taking money out of the budget, and it will send us into deficit . . ."

– **Senator Joseph Lieberman** (ABC's "This Week" 8/5)

"The truth is, in just 8 month President Bush and congressional Republicans have squandered the surplus built by a decade of Democratic-led fiscal discipline. That's because earlier this year, Republicans ignored Democrats' pleas for fiscal responsibility, and passed a tax and budget plan that has forced a Hobson's choice between raiding Social Security and Medicare, or sacrificing priorities like education and national defense."

– **Statement of Dem Caucus Chair Martin Frost** (housedemocrats.house.gov)

On having to keep the farm assistance package in the budget:

"The gun was held to our heads and the White House refused to compromise."

– **Senator Tom Harkin** (The New York Times, August 4, 2001)

Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Robert Byrd makes clear his opposition to what he calls on the Senate floor the Bush administration's **"stupid tax cut,"** which means less money for projects in states like West Virginia.

"I've already said to them that we don't have the money...the money isn't there because it's already committed by this huge tax cut."

On his own (lack of) commitment to control spending: "If I earmark something, it's because the people of West Virginia need it," he said, bouncing his index finger on a table. "Nobody from the White House can lecture me."

– **Sen. Byrd** (The New York Times, August 6, 2001)

"It was a mistake. It was too large, it was too unfocused, and it was too irresponsible."

"The point is, the administration has been very irresponsible in pushing this tax cut on the American people, while misleading them to believe that we can afford it."

"Well, the real spending has already taken place. When the administration put through this unrealistic tax cut, that was the real spending. That's where the money went out the door, and that's why we are going to have difficult times ahead."

– **Sen. Byrd** (CNN, CNN LIVE THIS MORNING, August 21, 2001)

Referring to the Bush tax relief as "*colossal, unwise, (and) irresponsible*," Senator Byrd added that it "*is enough to make you want to cry*."

– **Sen. Byrd** (The Washington Post, August 22, 2001)

"I'm glad we did what was right in 1993," he said, "and I'll do it again because I believe in being fiscally responsible with tax-payers' money."

– **House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt** (The Des Moines Register) (note: Gephardt's office later said that he did not mean the Dems would repeal the tax cut if they controlled the House).

"...We could be back into the days of debt in the not-too-distant future all because many could not find the prudence and the balance to limit their appetite for tax cuts."

– **Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle** at news briefing 5/26